

Washington, DC -- Congressman Vern Buchanan (FL-13) today called on the House Homeland Security Committee to investigate the shootings at Fort Hood as reports surfaced describing the assailant as an Islamic extremist whom witnesses say shouted Allahu Akbar (God is great) as he fired on unarmed victims.

The suspect, Major Nidal Hasan, also attended the same Virginia mosque as two Sept. 11 hijackers in 2001, according to the Washington Post.

"We have a lot of questions that need to be answered," Buchanan said in a letter today to the chairman of the Homeland Security Committee, Rep. Bennie Thompson, "the bottom line is we need to make sure our military installations are safe and that we are doing everything possible to protect our men and women serving on those bases."

Buchanan said this would not be the first time a military base was the target of a terrorist plot, pointing out failed attacks at Fort Dix in New Jersey and Quantico in Virginia.

"The Homeland Security Committee should investigate the motives behind the shooting and any connection between Hasan and terrorist organizations," Buchanan said. "If the shootings amounted to a terrorist attack, we need to know if this could have been averted and if enough is being done to prevent future attacks."

Buchanan noted that Senate Homeland Security Chairman Sen. Joe Lieberman (I-Conn.) intends to launch a congressional investigation into the attack.

The New York Times reported today that moments before Hasan's rampage, "witnesses say he bowed his head for several seconds, as if praying, stood up and drew a high-powered pistol. "Allahu akbar," he said — "God is great." And he opened fire. Within minutes he had killed 13 people.

The Washington Post reported today that federal investigators are examining possible links between Hasan and an American-born imam whom U.S. authorities say has become a supporter and leading promoter of al-Qaeda since leaving a Northern Virginia mosque.

The chairman of the Senate Homeland Security Committee said he plans to begin a congressional investigation of the shootings at Fort Hood.

Sen. Joe Lieberman, I-Ct., said Sunday he wants to determine whether the shootings constitute a terrorist attack. He says he also wants to find out whether the Army missed warning signs that Hasan was becoming extreme in his Islamist views.

The Connecticut independent says if Hasan was showing signs of becoming an Islamist radical, the Army should have shown "zero tolerance" and discharged him.